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History of
Andover, Massachusetts

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HISTORY OF ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

PAPER READ BY
MR. SCOTT H. PARADISE
BEFORE THE BAY STATE HISTORICAL LEAGUE
AT THE FALL MEETING HELD WITH THE
ANDOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Andover, Massachusetts



Andover, like every ancient New England town, has nobly borne her share in the vicissitudes of our early history. Andover men played their parts in the early Indian conflicts and in the French and Indian Wars. In fact, it was thought to be an act of direct revenge against our soldiers when scarcely a quarter of a mile from this spot, (A. H. S. House), on April 17, 1676, Joseph Abbot was killed, and his little brother, Timothy, carried away by the redskins. The witchcraft hysteria took its toll among us, and forty-one Andover people were accused of that sin, eight condemned, and two hanged. When at daybreak on April 19, 1775, the alarm that the redcoats were on the march reached us, plows were left in the furrow, breakfasts remained untouched upon the tables, and 222 men hastened off on the long march to Lexington and from there to Cambridge. It is an interesting fact that twenty of their number bore the same name as our honored president, Mr. Holt. There were apparently three Andover companies at Bunker Hill, and many Andover homes heard first-hand stories on winter evenings of the hardships and death so gallantly faced by fathers and brothers at Bennington, Ticonderoga, West Point, in Rhode Island, and at Valley Forge.

We have had our share of distinguished visitors. On November 5, 1789, Washington was the guest of Judge Phillips at the Mansion House, and received the acclaim of the townspeople and schoolboys on the Old Training Field, where the Memorial Tower now stands. In 1825, Lafayette accompanied Josiah Quincy on a visit to Andover. And on November 9, 1843, Daniel Webster spoke to an audience of thousands, on a spot which strangely enough cannot now be identified, and announced his formal return to the Whig ranks in Massachusetts.

But these are events similar to those of which many towns can boast. Andover's unique distinction lies in her schools, and with your permission, I will take up the story at the beginning once more, hurriedly pass over the early days, and then sketch briefly the personalities of a few of those who have made Andover famous as an educational centre.

Our story begins back in the spacious days of the first settlements in Massachusetts Bay. I use the word spacious advisedly, because among the most marked characteristics of our forefathers was their need for space. Almost as soon as a few score had landed on a bleak, uninhabited shore, three thousand miles from home, they began to feel cramped and crowded and to cast longing eyes towards the still more distant hinterland, where there was room to expand as their souls required. Hence, as early as 1639 a certain Reverend Nathaniel Ward, of Ipswich, feeling oppressed by the teeming population of that metropolis, which had been settled just six years, petitioned his good friend and relative, Governor Winthrop, for certain lands in the neighborhood of Lake Cochichawicke, a region which had been known ever since the expedition of Sieur de Mont and Champlain in 1604. These were duly granted him the next year by the General Court, with all the usual

privileges. The reverend gentleman had thus secured by a stroke of the pen most of the land now comprising the townships of Andover and Haverhill. It is interesting to note that this considerable tract of land was sold to the General Court by the sachem Cutshamakin for the sum of six pounds and a coat.

Andover may have been actually settled in 1642, though the first written evidence of residence here is dated 1643. The town was incorporated in 1646, but for the most part the first inhabitants preferred to settle about the shores of Lake Cochichawicke in what is now North Andover rather than in this immediate neighborhood. For more than 200 years, or until 1855, Andover as we know it was merely the south parish of the town.

The mists of the past have gathered thickly about those early settlers, and they are but dimly visible through the haze. Their houses, their household goods, even their graves have, with a few notable exceptions, vanished. All that is left is that most fragile of substances, a few scraps of paper. But from these scraps we gather that they were not so unlike ourselves, nor were their problems altogether different from our own. Puritan, austere, and righteous though we think of them, they were perplexed by much the same problem as that which today troubles us under the name of Prohibition. To take just one instance, Thomas Johnson, who was a constable at that, was charged with "allowing a barrel of cider to be drunk at his house at unseasonable hours by young people." Does not that charge, if we change constable to prohibition agent and young people to the younger generation, have a very modern ring to it? When a prominent citizen was arrested for being under the influence of liquor, Mr. Bradstreet, the magistrate, with a broadmindedness which would have appealed to some of the present-day scofflaws, excused him on the grounds that it was merely "some weakness that overtook him."

Then as now Godly men were troubled and made unhappy by the vagaries of feminine dress. The Reverend Nathaniel Ward speaks forthrightly of women:—

"If I see any of them accidently I cannot cleanse my phansie of them for at least a month after."

and again of the same disturbing sex:—

"I look upon her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of the quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing, fitter to be kickt if she were of a kickable substance, than either honored or humored."

Nor were our pious ancestors entirely free from the sins of quarreling and slandering. There is the interesting case of Job Tyler, who was apparently one of those who, in modern parlance, had "gone native," and who was living in this district, as Blackstone was living at Boston, when the first settlers arrived. He was monarch of all he surveyed until the advent of the "lords bretheren," as he said, put him to flight, as the rule of the "lords bishops" had driven him from the old country. Job had apprenticed his son, Hopestill, to Thomas Chandler to learn the blacksmith's trade. But later Job stole the instrument of indenture, broke his agreement, and from this originated a celebrated law suit which dragged on for ten years and ended with this illuminating apology from Job:—

"Whereas it doth appeare by sufficient testimony that I Job Tyler have shamefully reproached Thomas Chandler of Andevour by saying he is a base lying, cozening, cheating knave & that he hath got his estate by cozening in a base reviling manner & that he was recorded for a lyer & that he was a cheating, lying whoring knave fit for all manner of bawdery, wishing the devill had him. Therefore I Job Tyler doe acknowledge that I have in these expressions most wickedly slandered the said Thomas Chandler & that without any just ground — & therefore can doe noe less but expresse myselfe to be sorry for them & for my cursing of him desiring God & the said Thomas Chandler to forgive me——"

But certain figures emerge more clearly from the darkness of the past, and one who is most worthy of remembrance, may the shades of the Reverend Nathaniel Ward forgive us, was actually a woman. Anne Bradstreet, the first poetess of New England, whom Edward Phillips, the nephew of Milton, called "the tenth muse sprung up in America," and of whom President Rogers, of Harvard College, said that "twice drinking of the nectar of her lines" left him "weltering in delight," came here with her husband, the future governor, and he, according to the earliest book of records now extant, was the first freeholder in Andover.

Among the distinguished group on the same ship which brought Anne Bradstreet to Salem in 1630, was one George Phillips, a clergyman. One hundred and forty-eight years later his great-great-great-grandson, Samuel Phillips, Jr., founded a school in Andover which is today flourishing with a vigor of which the founder could never have dreamed. Sickly, morbid, and introspective as a youth, Phillips later developed surprising energy such as is sometimes found in those of frail physique. While holding many public offices — he was at various times delegate to the State Constitutional Convention, Justice for the Court of Common Pleas for Essex County, one of the commissioners treating with the disaffected citizens who had engaged in Shay's Rebellion, President of the Massachusetts Senate, and Lieutenant-Governor — he still found time to superintend two stores, to manage a saw-mill, a paper mill, a grist mill, and a powder mill, and to conduct agricultural experiments on several estates. And it was in the midst of this intensely active life, or rather at the start of it, for he was only twenty-six years old at the time, and while he was conducting in Andover the first mill to furnish powder to the Colonial Army, that he conceived and founded this school on such sound principles that it has grown to be the institution we see about us today. In such a man with his Puritan background, his ill-health, his ceaseless activity we cannot look to find the more genial human qualities such as humor or ease of manner.

Judge Phillips was, in fact, grave and unbending. Among his children romping and "unseemly levity" was put down with a firm hand. He addressed his wife in his letters as "My dear Friend," and his sons wrote to him as "Honored Sir." Typical of him is a quotation from one of his letters: "Be more covetous of your hours than misers are of gold," and again, "Bar your doors and secure your eyes, your ears, and your heart against all who would rob you of your treasure; I mean your time." But though lacking in the lighter graces, Judge Phillips stands out as a man of industry and perseverance, of sincere faithfulness and utter devotion to duty — a truly noble character. In his great humility there is a touch of pathos, for he wrote

when the school he had founded was flourishing, when he had for years devoted himself to patriotic service, and when he had won the admiration of all who knew him, these words:—

“Forty and five years of my pilgrimage are now completed, and to very little purpose, either for the honor of my Maker or for the benefit of mankind; consequently I have hardly learned the true end of living.”

While Samuel Phillips was studying at Dummer Academy, and while he was experimenting with his powder mill, one of his closest associates was Eliphalet Pearson, the impress of whose character upon Andover was to be almost as great as Phillips' own. Phillips made him the first Principal of the Academy, and he was, in truth, a master of the old school, cruel, domineering, and exacting. Never popular with the boys, who dubbed him “Elephant,” the chief impression he made upon them was one of unmitigated fear. Once after an offender had been censured by Pearson, the victim was asked: “How do you feel?” “I pinched myself to see if I was alive,” was the answer. Though he sang well and played the violoncello, though he could take an engine apart or construct a violin, though he knew Latin, Greek, French, Hebrew, Syriac, and Coptic, Pearson's stubborn and irascible nature made him no friends. But it was perhaps as well that the infant school had over it such a firm hand and such a keen mind to guide it in its crucial days. Washington once said of him: “His eye shows him worthy not only to lead boys, but to command man.”

But Pearson's work with the Academy was perhaps no more important than his part in founding the Andover Theological Seminary, an institution which for 100 years was far more famous than the school. In 1785, Pearson was induced to leave Andover by the offer of a professorship at Harvard. There he remained for twenty years, and in 1804 acted as President of the College. But in the next year the great controversy between Calvinism and Unitarianism reached a crisis. Harvard elected the Unitarian, Reverend Henry Ware, as President, and Pearson resigned in disgust. Being offered a house by the Academy trustees, he returned to Andover and soon broached the subject of establishing here an orthodox seminary to combat the heretical opinions prevalent in Cambridge. It was through his suggestion and through his persuasion that Mr. Samuel Abbot contributed the sum which assured the establishment of the Andover Theological Seminary, the first institution in the country exclusively for the training of clergymen. About that Seminary on this hilltop gathered some of the best minds of the day, among them Leonard Woods, Moses Stuart, Edwards Park, and Ebenezer Porter, and from it went out a stream of religious influence that made itself felt even in the most remote corners of the earth.

Pearson's second aim when he returned to Andover was to improve the literature of theology, and especially to provide for the publication of learned treatises, and with this in mind he enlarged the existing press in Andover and established it near the Seminary. He was indeed fortunate in the type of men he found to conduct his pet enterprise. Timothy Flagg and Abraham J. Gould, the two first proprietors, were in hearty sympathy with the aims of the Seminary and regarded their press as a trust to be used in furthering religious faith. These estimable men set the tone which was to survive as long as the old press endured and which gave it such a high reputation in

the educational and religious world, and Warren F. Draper, the last and most notable of its proprietors, carried still further the tradition of the "Christian business man." By 1829 the press had type for eleven Oriental languages besides Hebrew, and books were issued there which could not have been printed at any other press in America. Many a Seminary graduate carried the inspiration derived from the work of the press to far-off mission fields and allowed no difficulties of language to prevent the writing and printing of religious works. According to Professor Park's speech at the Centennial in 1878, Andover alumni had written scores and hundreds of volumes in the tongues of the Mahratta and Tamil, Arabic and Syriac, Armeno-Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, Cherokee, Choctaw, the various languages of Africa, and the islands of the seas. Fired by the same inspiration they had not only written grammars and lexicons, but had invented alphabets for languages where none existed before; they had not only written but had printed the books they wrote; they had not only set the type, but had occasionally made the type with their own hands. With a note of justifiable elation Professor Park concludes: "There is no man now living who can read the alphabets of all the languages in which the alumni of our Seminary have published their thoughts."

Of the books actually printed by the press more than 100 were by Andover professors. And their brilliant wives and daughters were not to be left behind. Six of them, among them were Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, published books in Andover which had a circulation of at least a million.

I wish it were possible to tell you of other characters who have made their mark in Andover, of Squire Farrar, Treasurer and Trustee who forgot to wind his clock only three times in forty years, and by whose daily walks the neighbors set their watches; of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who converted the carpenter shop where the theological students gained their exercise and recreation by making coffins (one never got very far from the eternal verities on Andover Hill in those days) into a charming home, and who with her innocent charades and Christmas festivities scandalized her religious neighbors. But I must be content with a few of those who have impressed their personalities upon Andover until their lives have become a part of the tradition of the town. It is in the lives and accomplishments of such men and women that our history consists.



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